

**Para Todos
Facilitator Guide
DVD 2—Chapter 5
Illicit Drugs**

Dear Facilitators:

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information and strategies to help prevent our children from using illicit drugs.

Chapter Goals:

1. Learn about the most commonly used illegal drugs among youth.
2. Recognize the warning signs of drug use.
3. Understand the physical and mental effects of illegal drug use.
4. Encourage parents to seek help for their children if they suspect a problem.

Suggestions for Guest Speakers:

- To enrich the session, the facilitator could invite the following experts:
- Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC)
- Psychologist specializing in drug rehabilitation.
- Police officer experienced in narcotics
- School counselor
- Social worker

VIDEO, PART I

Main Concepts:

The following concepts are presented in the first section:

1. As parents, we do not always have an accurate perception of what is going on with our children. For example, a study conducted by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States asked parents about their children's drug use. The study found that only 5 percent of parents thought their children

had used drugs; however, 69 percent of young people reported having used drugs (SIECUS, 2000).

2. Many factors increase the risk of our children becoming involved in substance use. One example is living in neighborhoods with the following characteristics:
 - High crime rates
 - Neighbors who do not look out for each other
 - Adults who accept the use of drugs in their community (have favorable attitudes toward drug use)
 - Adults who are involved in substance use
 - Easy access to drugs.

As parents, we can reduce these risk factors by getting involved in our children's lives. For example:

1. Establish and maintain good communication with your children.
2. Get involved in your children's lives.
3. Know where your children are, how they spend their free time, and how they use their spending money. Ask about the music they like and the books they are reading.
4. Encourage them to aim high and go after their goals.
5. Establish that the use of drugs is unacceptable, and let them know the consequences of disobeying these rules.
6. Set a good example for your children. Be aware of the messages you convey in your words and actions.
7. Support your children's social development. Involve your children in activities and reassure them that they can count on you in difficult or stressful situations, and that they can always talk to you about any of their concerns.

Participants should understand the following important points:

- Many adolescents begin experimenting with alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs at an early age.

- As parents, we have the greatest influence on our children's lives, and have the best chance of preventing them from using alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs.
- There is help. To find a treatment center near you, visit <http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov/> or call 1-800-729-6686 and ask to speak with an information specialist.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION #22

Participants respond to the following questions:

1. What is the difference between what parents think and what their children think about the accessibility of drugs?
2. Which factors increase the risk of drug use?
3. What can we do to reduce these risks?

VIDEO, PART II

Nora Volkow, M.D., Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, highlights the dangers of marijuana use:

“Some Latino adolescents start using marijuana at around 13, which is even earlier than we thought before. Today, marijuana is considered a ‘gateway’ drug, which means that most people who use strong drugs like cocaine or heroin started by smoking marijuana first—that is the origin of the term ‘gateway.’”

Harmful consequences of marijuana use:

- Difficulty studying
- Difficulty with athletic activities
- Short-term memory loss
- Difficulty doing homework
- Slow perception and reflexes
- Increased likelihood of dangerous sexual practices (e.g., danger of being infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS)

Warning signs of marijuana use:

- Dizziness
- Silly behavior
- Red or irritated eyes
- Difficulty remembering recent events
- Sleepiness.

Nora Volkow, M.D., emphasizes the importance of an honest dialogue between parents and their children:

“One of the most important things that parents can do when they suspect their children are using marijuana is to be honest and maintain an open dialogue with them. I recommend that parents talk with and listen to their child in a way that will not put them on the defensive. We should talk to children without being judgmental, and help them understand why drugs are harmful.”

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION #23

Participants respond to the following questions:

- How can we explain to our children that marijuana use is dangerous?
- What are the best reasons we can give our children not to use marijuana?

VIDEO, PART III

Main Concepts:

The following concepts are presented in the third section:

1. Cocaine is one of the most addictive drugs. It can be inhaled through the nose as a powder, injected, or smoked.
2. When cocaine addicts stop using cocaine, they become depressed and, to alleviate their depression, they use more cocaine. This leads to a vicious cycle that is difficult to break.
3. If you think your child is using cocaine, seek help immediately.
4. To find a treatment center near you, visit <http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov/> or call 1-800-729-6686 and ask to speak with an information specialist.

Note to facilitator: Provide participants with a listing of local resources.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION #24

Participants respond to the following questions:

- What can you do if your child is using cocaine?
- Where can you find help for a cocaine addiction?

VIDEO, PART IV

Nora Volkow, M.D., talks about the dangers of ecstasy:

“Ecstasy is a very dangerous drug. According to recent studies conducted on animals, it has been observed that ecstasy damages the brain cells that regulate mood swings. As a result, ecstasy can damage these cells and increase a person’s chances of becoming depressed.”

“Also, according to a study about ecstasy’s effects on young people, it has been found to cause memory problems. When ecstasy is used in crowded places, such as nightclubs or raves, it can increase the body temperature to the point where it causes brain damage. The person can collapse and/or die as a result of this extreme increase in body temperature.”

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION #25

Participants respond to the following questions:

1. What can we say to our children about ecstasy?
2. What questions can we ask to initiate a conversation with our children?
3. What advice can we give our children about ecstasy and other drugs that are used in nightclubs?

VIDEO, PART V—CONCLUSION

Nora Volkow, M.D., talks about heroin addiction:

“Heroin addiction should be taken very seriously. There are medications that can be used to help treat the addiction. Methadone is one of the medications used to help heroin addicts overcome their urge to use heroin. Another drug that is used is called buprenorphine, which alleviates the symptoms of heroin withdrawal.”

Signs of heroin use:

- Restlessness
- Chills and goose bumps
- Muscle and joint pain
- Fainting and seizures.
- Diarrhea and vomiting

Nora Volkow, M.D., talks about the dangers of anabolic steroids:

“Young athletes frequently use steroids because they promote muscular growth. Unfortunately, steroids have harmful effects. They damage the muscular cells and, as a result, there is danger of heart failure. Evidently, many young athletes think that a young person who gets exercise and does sports is not at risk for heart failure. This is a risk that all athletes should be aware of.”

“Also, it has been shown that the use of steroids increases the risk of certain types of cancer, especially liver cancer. Steroids have negative effects on reproductive hormones. For example, they can make testicles smaller, which results in a lower sperm count. As a result, testosterone levels are lowered and breast size increases.”

“It is interesting to note that, in women, steroids produce the opposite effect. Women who take these drugs experience hair loss. Their voice becomes more masculine, and facial hair appears. Women become more masculine, while men become more feminine. Acne increases in both men and women.”

Side effects of steroid use:

- Tumors in the liver
- Increase in blood pressure
- Yellow skin
- Severe acne
- Fluid retention
- Shakiness.

Steroid use by men can produce:

- Smaller testicles
- Baldness
- Infertility
- Larger breasts.

Steroid use by women can produce:

- Masculinity
- Increase in the size of the clitoris
- Facial hair growth
- Deeper voice.
- Irregular menstrual cycles

The facilitator can read the following list of warning signs for steroid use:

- Rapid and unexpected muscle growth
- Severe acne on the face, back, and chest
- Yellow skin
- Withdrawal from family, friends, and things that previously were enjoyable
- Depression, hostility, or aggression
- Sudden changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Poor performance in school.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION #26

Participants respond to the following questions:

- How should coaches approach the subject of steroid use with young athletes?
- What reasons can you give your children for staying away from anabolic steroids?

Nora Volkow, M. D., makes a final recommendation:

“As a protective measure, I recommend that parents become involved in their children’s lives from an early age, informing them about the effects of drug use. It is not enough to just say: ‘Drugs are very harmful.’ They need to explain why drugs can be dangerous, and what the consequences are of using them. It is very important to warn our children about situations in which their friends can offer them drugs, and teach them different ways to say no.”

Note to facilitator: Provide participants with a list of local treatment programs and centers. Ideally, the list should include directions, phone numbers, schedules, and most importantly, the availability of Spanish-language services.

Optional Activities

Next, we offer suggestions for group activities that are not included in the video. If you would like to tell us how the activity worked with your group, or suggest ideas for additional activities, please contact us at webmaster@hablemos.samhsa.gov.

ACTIVITY 1: Marijuana

Goal: To identify warning signs of Marijuana use.

- **Divide** the participants into two or three groups.
- **Ask** participants to make a list of signs that might indicate a youngster is using marijuana.
- **Ask** a representative from each group to present the group's conclusions.

Examples of signs that could indicate an adolescent is using marijuana:

- Dizziness
- Difficulty walking
- Uncontrollable laughter
- Red and irritated eyes
- Difficulty remembering recent events
- Sleepiness after the first side effects disappear.

ACTIVITY #2: Ecstasy

- **Divide** participants into two groups.
- **Ask** them to work on the following question:

1. Why is ecstasy attractive to our children?

- **Ask** a volunteer from each group to present the group's conclusions.

The following are some reasons ecstasy might be attractive to our children:

- Feeling of mental stimulation
- Overall feeling of wellness
- Emotional warmth
- Decrease in anxiety.
- Empathy toward others

- **Ask** the participants to work on the following question:

1. What are negative effects of using ecstasy?

- **Ask** a volunteer from each group to present the group's conclusions.

The following are some of the negative effects of ecstasy use:

- Chills
- Muscles spasms or cramps
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Involuntary teeth grinding
- Blurry vision.

ACTIVITY #3: Steroids

- **Explain** that some side effects vary by gender.
- **Draw** two figures on the board, one female and one male.
- **Explain** the general side effects of steroid use (i.e., liver tumors, yellow skin, fluid retention, increase in blood pressure, severe acne, and body tremors).
- **Ask** participants to explain how steroids affect both men and women.
- **Write** the effects underneath the corresponding picture.

Examples of side effects by gender:

Steroid use by men can cause:

- Smaller testicles
- Infertility
- Baldness
- Enlarged breasts.

Steroid use by women can cause:

- Masculinity
- Facial hair growth
- Irregular menstrual cycles
- Increase in clitoris size
- Deeper voice.